

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. – 11. (canceled)

12. (currently amended) An automatic analyzer comprising:

a sample dispensing mechanism for dispensing a sample from a sample container;

a sample container disk, arranged to accommodate a plurality of sample containers arranged circularly on said sample container disk, and to transfer the sample containers to a sample dispensing position of said sample dispensing mechanism;

an information reader arranged to read, when said sample container is positioned at an information reading position, an information recorded on an information recording medium attached to said sample container positioned at said information reading position; and

~~a sample hand-contact preventing plate arranged to cover a part of said sample container disk so as to cover a sample container positioned at said sample dispensing position, and so as to cover a sample container positioned at said information reading position;~~ a controller for controlling said sample dispensing mechanism and said sample container disk, for identifying a sample in a sample container on the basis of the information read by said information reader, and for checking whether or not a sample to be sucked or already sucked by said sample

dispensing mechanism is a sample whose information has been previously read by said information reader immediately before the checking by said controller.

13. – 19. (canceled)

20. (new) An automatic analyzer according to claim 12, wherein said controller controls said sample dispensing mechanism to suck a sample from said sample container when the sample to be sucked is the same sample whose information has been already read by said information reader.

21. (new) An automatic analyzer according to claim 12, wherein said controller issues an alarm when a sample that has been dispensed is different from the sample identified.

22. (new) An automatic analyzer according to claim 12, further comprising a cover for preventing a sample container from being taken out of the sample container disk from the time information recorded on an information recording medium attached to the sample container has again been read immediately before the dispensation of the sample by the sample dispensing mechanism, until the sample dispensing mechanism has dispensed the sample from the sample container.

23. (new) An automatic analyzer according to claim 22, wherein the cover comprises a portion covering at least one part of a moving locus of the front end of a probe of the sample dispensing mechanism.

24. (new) An automatic analyzer according to claim 22, wherein the cover further comprises a mechanism for moving from a position covering the sample container disk so that a sample container on the sample container disk can be taken out.

25. (new) An automatic analyzer according to claim 24, further comprising a movement detector for detecting the movement of the cover, wherein said controller controls said sample dispensing mechanism so as not to dispense a sample when the movement detector detects the movement of the cover.

26. (new) An automatic analyzer according to claim 22, wherein the cover is made of an electrically conductive material.